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Disarmament Commission
312th meeting
Tuesday, 5 April 2011, 10 a.m.
New York

Chair: Mr. Al Bayati ..... (Iraq)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

General debate (*continued*)

Mr. Farghal (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of Egypt is pleased to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the current session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, as well as the members of the Bureau. We are confident that your wisdom and experience will guide the current session towards achieving the desired outcome, given your country's role as an active member of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of Arab States and the Group of Asian States.

The delegation of Egypt aligns itself with the statements delivered by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the representative of Nigeria, on behalf of the African Group.

The successful conclusion of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) serves as a good basis on which we can build so as to revitalize international disarmament efforts within the framework of the United Nations. Furthermore, we note a number of other positive developments, such as the ratification of the New START agreement by the United States and the Russian Federation, the high-level meeting on strengthening international disarmament mechanisms convened by the Secretary-General last September, and other relevant advances that have helped to improve the environment for negotiations on United Nations disarmament mechanisms.

Despite such positive developments, the international community continues to witness increasing challenges in regional and international security and stability that threaten the credibility of existing international treaties and agreements. The most serious of those is some States either evading their obligations or failing to implement their commitments under false pretences. Such challenges must be addressed with the necessary urgency.

Egypt is therefore increasingly concerned about the continuing stagnation of the current international environment in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation at the international and regional levels, in particular with regard to the international community's respect for the priority of its basic terms of reference under international treaties, United Nations resolutions and decisions of the relevant international forums. Although the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament identified the goal of nuclear disarmament as the key priority for international efforts in the field of disarmament and arms control, the world is still witnessing setbacks in the process of achieving nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the universality of the NPT, the cornerstone of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, the multilateral efforts of the five nuclear-weapon States remain extremely limited, in particular in relation to

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the commitments made by those States under the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In the area of non-proliferation, regrettably, we are seeing efforts to prioritize non-proliferation in the absence of parallel progress in nuclear disarmament, under the assumption of some illusory linkage between the achievement of non-proliferation and the imposition of limitations on the benefits available to non-nuclear-weapon States as a result of their inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. That represents a challenge in the context of the principles of the NPT and the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency with regard to nuclear verification.

Furthermore, to date no progress has been made in the practical implementation of the action plan on the Middle East adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference, in particular on mandating the Secretary-General and the three depositary States of the NPT, in consultation with the States of the region, to convene a conference in 2012 on the establishment in the region of a zone free of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction. It is thus cause for concern that to date a facilitator has not been chosen and the venue of the conference has not been determined. In that regard, the delegation of Egypt calls for the finalization, as soon as possible, of the aforementioned procedural measures so as to enable a facilitator to be appointed to immediately begin the necessary substantive consultations with concerned States so that the conference can be convened within the agreed time frame and its success facilitated.

To meet those challenges, the delegation of Egypt looks forward to actively participating in the deliberations of Working Group I on "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons", Working Group II on "Elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade", and Working Group III, which will discuss the topic "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons".

Egypt stresses the need for the efforts of Working Group I during this session of the Commission to be geared to achieving an outcome that promotes the implementation of General Assembly resolutions on nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, including the two resolutions submitted by Egypt that were adopted by the General Assembly during this session, namely, resolution 65/42, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", and resolution 65/88, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East".

The results of the current session of the Disarmament Commission must also strengthen the plan of action adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference to convene a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons as well as of other weapons of mass destruction, in implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

The Working Group should issue concrete recommendations aimed at ensuring that the credibility of the international non-proliferation regime is not eroded as a result of nuclear-weapon States not implementing their obligations in accordance with the consensus on which the NPT was built, represented in the nuclear-weapon States' destruction of their nuclear arsenals in return for a commitment by non-nuclear-weapon States to refrain from seeking to acquire such weapons.

These deficiencies in implementation hamper the effectiveness of the non-proliferation efforts and contribute to obstructing efforts to achieve the universality of the treaty, bringing its credibility into question.

It is known to all that strengthening the international disarmament agenda does not depend only on the implementation of existing commitments but requires the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament and the highlighting of the importance of that forum as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament.

In the context of revitalizing the role of the Conference on Disarmament, we must recognize that many of the central objectives in the field of disarmament can be achieved at the international level only through negotiations within the Conference, such as negotiations on a nuclear-weapons convention aimed at a total ban on nuclear weapons, with the year 2025 as the appropriate time frame for the realization of a nuclear-weapon-free world through such negotiations, and negotiations on crafting a legally binding international instrument that provides non-nuclear-weapon States with unconditional assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, pending the realization of nuclear disarmament.

Our delegation believes that it is particularly important to include as an element of the fourth disarmament decade the imperative need to convene the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We must also emphasize the importance of holding the organizational session of the Open-ended Working Group at the earliest in order to set a date for its substantive sessions in 2011 and 2012, which will include the establishment of the Preparatory Committee for the fourth special session, on the theme of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

We must focus on the pivotal importance of the existing structures of the United Nations, including in particular the framework represented by the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as a politically binding instrument which deals with the illicit trade in such arms.

Furthermore, any discussion on the issue of conventional weapons must recognize all the relevant principles of the Charter, especially the right of States to manufacture, import and retain conventional arms for purposes of their legitimate self-defence. I wish to refer here to the ongoing discussions concerning the proposed Arms Trade Treaty, a conference on which will take place in 2012. I wish to point out that the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, which was held only a few weeks ago, demonstrated the need to observe the consensus rule, as well as the importance of reflecting the views of all States in an objective, balanced, fair and transparent manner. This is essential if there is to be a genuine desire to reach a universal, fair and balanced treaty that focuses on saving lives, rather than remaining limited for the purpose of the reallocation of shares in international sales of conventional arms and the granting of exceptional political and commercial benefits for major arms-exporting countries.

In conclusion, I would like to assure you, Sir, that the delegation of Egypt will cooperate with you, Bureau members and all delegations in the process of reaching a successful outcome of the work of the Commission, in order to achieve all of the lofty objectives related to disarmament issues on the agenda of the Commission this year.

Mr. Rai (Nepal): I wish to begin, Sir, by congratulating you on your election as Chair as well as other members of the Bureau on their election. I am fully confident that your able leadership will guide the Commission's deliberations towards a tangible conclusion.

I wish to thank Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative of the Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his succinct presentation.

I align my statement with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Disarmament Commission has been serving as a deliberative body, with the function of making recommendations and ensuring follow-up with respect to various issues in the field of disarmament. Since its establishment in 1978 by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Commission has succeeded in delivering many concrete results by formulating consensus principles, guidelines and recommendations in a number of areas in the field of disarmament, including guidelines for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. This tradition of achieving concrete results must continue. The Commission must be fully utilized as a platform for sincerely pursuing the shared goal of disarmament.

My delegation is confident that this time, all three Working Groups of the current substantive session will produce concrete results with regard to their respective agendas.

Following the convening of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development in 1987, our collective call is to reserve our precious yet limited resources for the well-being of human beings, instead of producing and procuring devastating armaments. It is never too late to act for the maintenance of international peace and security, with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources, as envisioned in Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations.

The relationship between disarmament and development is complex but undeniable. The notion of security goes beyond the traditional narrow concept of military security. In today's world, more than at any time in the past, it encompasses political, economic, social, humanitarian, human rights and environmental aspects. Security remains elusive in this volatile world, where multiple crises affect disproportionately the poor

and vulnerable, who are already frustrated at the prevailing levels of inequality, poverty, hunger and disease. Ever-growing military expenditures are a clear example of the unsavory fact of the diversion of financial, technological and human resources for destructive purposes. This is the case at a time when global poverty eradication and development goals are not being met owing to a lack of funds.

Nearly seven decades after the first use of atomic bombs, which inflicted untold sorrow, that is still a mainstay of national security policy for a number of States. However, the threat to international peace and security persists unabated. Even after the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regime, in 1995, the world has not yet witnessed significant actions towards nuclear disarmament.

We are waiting for the remaining annex 2 countries that have not yet done so to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

My delegation notes with satisfaction that the 64-point action plan concluded by the 2010 NPT Review Conference encompasses all three of the Treaty's pillars. The implementation of that plan would lead us towards the desired goal of disarmament and non-proliferation.

We believe that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones by various treaties helps to promote non-proliferation in the respective regions. It is inspiring to note that currently more than 110 countries belong to legally binding nuclear-weapon-free zones.

We also appreciate the recent entry into force of the 10-year New START agreement between the Russian Federation and the United States of America. It is imperative that the nuclear-weapon States that hold the majority of the world's nuclear weapons set forth bold decisions for disarmament.

Small arms and light weapons have caused devastating effects on many developing countries, particularly on conflict-ridden countries. The myriad numbers of small arms and light weapons require our urgent action to prevent their possible diversion to non-authorized recipients, including non-State actors. We emphasize that the effective implementation of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons would help to curb this problem.

While we appreciate the various initiatives that like-minded countries have presented in the field of disarmament, my delegation places special emphasis on the immediate revival of the Conference on Disarmament as a multilateral disarmament negotiation forum. Member States have to work harder to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in an earnest manner. Nepal is of the view that the early convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, with the broader participation of Member States, would help unblock the deadlock in the disarmament machinery and processes in a comprehensive way.

As the host to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Nepal attaches great importance to multilateral negotiations in disarmament and non-proliferation. This approach promotes collective deliberations, responsibility and ownership by all for collective global action. Regional organizations could also play an important role in strengthening confidence-building measures.

In conclusion, if global peace, security and prosperity are our shared objectives, we must redouble our efforts to ensure the universal application of the instruments we have developed. The effective implementation of our past commitments will be crucial to consolidating further progress in the field of disarmament. We should also shoulder our responsibility to make the Disarmament Commission a consensus-generating body. We should all strive to make disarmament a reality through our resolute collective action.

Mr. Kleib (Indonesia): Mr. Chair, allow me to read out the national statement of Indonesia on behalf of my Permanent Representative.

> "Mr. Chair, let me first congratulate you on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission at this very important session. I also congratulate the members of the Bureau and the Chair of Working Group II on their respective elections. Indonesia looks forward to participating and contributing actively in Commission deliberations which, we are confident, will produce tangible results under the very able stewardship of you and your team members.

"My delegation associates itself with the statement made yesterday on behalf of Non-Aligned Movement.

"We thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for his remarks. They remind us of the Commission's great potential for achieving consensus on the various critical issues in the field of disarmament. Indeed, there is great potential in the Commission for making concrete advances on the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. The international community's expectations that we do so are high. It is Indonesia's hope that, just as in 1999 when the Commission achieved consensus on the guidelines for establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones and regarding conventional arms control, we will again bring our respective political capital to bear on generating an outcome befitting this year's session.

"Indonesia expects that, in keeping with resolution 65/86, as well as earlier mandates, this session will finalize an agreement on the elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade. Even though the Working Group on this topic could not conclude its work last year, there was a very meaningful discussion on the whole spectrum of disarmament issues. We encourage all Member States to build and expand on the common points forged last year in order to produce a comprehensive and principles-based result.

"Similarly, we need to do our utmost to reach agreement on concrete recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in all their aspects. We hope that upon the successful conclusion of the preparation of the elements for the declaration on the fourth disarmament decade, we will also see forward-looking work on the agenda of practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

"While the challenges in the field of global nuclear disarmament are obvious, there have been some optimistic signs. The outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the New START agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation are encouraging. Indonesia welcomes every opportunity to advance the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

"As we are mindful that such developments, vital as they are, are not an end unto themselves, we must all use these developments as building blocks that enhance support for the edifice to bring about total nuclear disarmament. In that regard, the importance of dialogue, mutual respect and cooperation among countries and political groupings cannot be emphasized enough.

"The expectation of the overwhelming majority of global citizenry remains that there must be deeper and time-bound actions towards complete nuclear disarmament. In that respect, the nuclear-weapon States should implement their respective undertakings with regard to nuclear disarmament.

"Indonesia views the role of the Disarmament Commission to be all the more important in facilitating an exchange of various viewpoints, given the optimistic international movements in the field of disarmament and in building consensus on the issues on its agenda.

"My delegation underscores the significance of the Disarmament Commission as the only specialized, authoritative and deliberative part of the United Nations disarmament machinery. The Commission, as the only institution of universal membership that can sustain in-depth deliberations on the critical issues at stake through substantive recommendations for achieving disarmament goals, must continue to be central to international efforts.

"To effectively tackle and achieve success on the challenges of disarmament and non-proliferation, it is crucial that we all work together to materialize our respective undertakings and support the aims of the Commission.

"For its part, Indonesia assures all Member States of its constructive engagement and cooperation. We are certain that through cooperation and collaboration among delegations, and by exhibiting the requisite political will, we can bring about a genuinely substantive and

result-oriented session of this vital body that is the Disarmament Commission."

Mr. Bavaud (Switzerland): The Swiss delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair of the 2011 session of the Disarmament Commission and to wish you every success in that role. We also wish to extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

Switzerland welcomes the activities that have been carried out during the past year by Working Groups I and II, which addressed, respectively, recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and elements of a draft declaration for the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade. My delegation will also continue to pursue its commitment by giving consideration to practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons before concluding this three-year cycle. I wish to take this opportunity to assure you, Sir, of the full support of my delegation in the performance of your tasks.

(*spoke in French*)

The arms control and disarmament processes have long played a crucial role in maintaining security and promoting peace at the international level. By providing a response to the challenges posed by such issues as illegal and uncontrolled trafficking in conventional arms and armed conflict, these processes also contribute to strengthening human security, the protection of human rights and economic development. The fact that the multilateral disarmament bodies have been blocked for far too many years is therefore a matter of particular concern. The consequences are significant and are already making themselves felt. If a way out cannot be found, these consequences will become more acute in the future.

Indeed, disarmament bodies no longer seem to be able to provide answers to the challenges they face. One of the reasons for that shortcoming lies in the fact that numerous players are focusing their attention primarily on considerations of national security instead of on more global issues. This kind of narrow approach is no longer appropriate, since today national interests and global security can no longer be separated. New impetus is therefore required in order to redress the imbalance between the acuteness of the problems and the lack of progress on them.

The main objective of the Disarmament Commission as a specialized and deliberative forum within the United Nations disarmament mechanism is to reinforce or create disarmament norms by submitting concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. In the past, such recommendations have demonstrated the Commission's added value. However, this body has not been able to adopt any recommendations of substance for more than 11 years now. The value that it provides to the disarmament and arms control processes therefore needs to be reassessed.

Potential measures for remedying this situation need to be examined in greater depth. The deadlock faced by the Disarmament Commission is to some extent tied to the fact that it has two items on its agenda, namely, nuclear arms and conventional weapons. This gives rise to a situation that hardly encourages progress, since lack of progress in one area results in deadlock in the other. The option of limiting the Commission's agenda to one item would therefore be worth examining. The Disarmament Commission could thus become an innovator in the areas it deals with. It could address the issue of experiences in implementation and best practices in this domain. It could even address the matter of the revitalization of the disarmament machinery, which is indeed a topical issue.

There are also other options that could be examined more closely. One such option is for the Disarmament Commission to serve as an intersessional meeting on disarmament for the annual session of the General Assembly. Another option would be to allow the Chair of the Commission to submit a report to the General Assembly in his own name. If there should be a lack of consensus on whether to allow the Disarmament Commission to become more active, reducing its duration from two weeks to one would also be a measure worth considering.

I would also like to comment on other aspects of the disarmament machinery. The Conference on Disarmament is the sole permanent multilateral forum for negotiations in the area of disarmament. It is an essential instrument for all States, large or small, to further their interests in terms of security. Its inability to undertake any negotiations for the past 13 years is therefore all the more unacceptable.

Switzerland is anxious to ensure that steps are taken to render the Conference on Disarmament functional again. We are willing to participate in negotiations on all the main items on the agenda. We believe that it is particularly important that rapid progress be made with respect to prohibiting the production of fissile materials for the production of nuclear weapons, preventing an arms race in outer space and promoting nuclear disarmament.

The events that took place at the beginning of this year have strengthened Switzerland's conviction that the procedures governing this forum are contributing to its inability to act. These procedures were developed during the Cold War and are no longer entirely appropriate today. Even if there is common political will to move forward, any such movement is being thwarted by particularly restrictive rules of procedure. Therefore, specific security considerations are systematically taking precedence over considerations of a more global nature.

While we believe that the existence of a permanent forum entrusted with the task of negotiating legal instruments relating to disarmament is something that is as relevant today as it has been in the past, the current situation nonetheless prompts us to ask serious questions. If the existing mechanism no longer functions and is itself one of the reasons for the current deadlock, we have to ask ourselves whether we should adopt a different approach.

We welcome the fact that efforts are being made to finally put an end to the deadlock that is hampering disarmament mechanisms. An initiative undertaken at several levels represents the best way to make progress in the current situation. The High-level Meeting convened by the Secretary-General on 24 September 2010 was a first step in that direction, which was complemented by the adoption of a General Assembly resolution concerning follow-up measures (resolution 65/93). In our view, it is both logical and appropriate to quickly move on to the next phase. A debate at the expert level needs to be held within the scope of the General Assembly before the end of the sixty-fifth session. Such an event would support the action that has already been taken and would facilitate an evaluation of the progress that has been made since September's High-level Meeting.

Switzerland also believes that the debate that was initiated at the Meeting should be incorporated into the activities of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We would hope that this would give rise to the identification of initial solutions that would enable us to find a way out of this difficult situation.

We also hope that the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters will be able to make a substantial and constructive contribution towards that process. We hope that it will also be able to take into account the concerns and hopes of all States in its deliberations. In our view, the Advisory Board should focus specifically on the key problems of the difficulty in reaching consensus in both the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament, the necessity of reviewing the rules concerning participation in the Conference and the rules of procedure and agenda of that forum. It should also examine issues that have not been subject to genuine analyses to date — for example, determining whether a body like the Disarmament Commission, which has a uniquely deliberative function, still makes sense today, or whether the functions of this body should be consolidated with those of the Conference on Disarmament.

With each passing year, it becomes increasingly difficult to accept the deadlock that is hampering disarmament bodies. The consequences of this deadlock are also becoming more severe. The challenges faced by the international community are not being met with a suitable response and are growing increasingly acute and difficult to overcome. In this situation, it appears to us that it is also becoming increasingly difficult to maintain that a comprehensive review of the disarmament mechanisms or a fundamentally new approach in this sector are not necessary. I would like to conclude by saying that, as far as Switzerland is concerned, we will do everything in our power to overcome the current deadlock.

Mr. Rao (India): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair of the Disarmament Commission. I assure you of my delegation's full support in the discharge of your responsibilities. Let me also express my appreciation for the important contributions to our debate by the Secretary-General and his High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

India associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

India attaches great importance to the United Nations disarmament machinery that was put in place by consensus at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. As the specialized deliberative organ, the Disarmament Commission forms a vital part of that machinery. It offers Member States a unique opportunity to bridge differences and arrive at principles and recommendations with potential for universal acceptance. India believes that the Commission can play a central role in developing consensus on the disarmament issues faced by the international community.

With regard to Working Group I on "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons", we have had an extensive exchange of views both in the last cycle and in the last two years of this cycle. However, although we came close to doing so in 2008, it has not been possible to arrive at a consensus on these recommendations. India remains willing to engage constructively with a view to developing such consensus in this year's meetings.

Nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority for India and the Non-Aligned Movement. India has been consistent in its support for global, complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament. In 1988, Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi presented an Action Plan for a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world order to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (see A/S-15/PV.14). The Plan postulated reaching a nuclear-weapon-free world in stages by 2010. The end of the Cold War kept the hope alive that we would be able to reach that goal, but it was not to be. We are no nearer to attaining that goal today than we were in 1988. The imperative need to move towards the goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons remains as valid today as it was two decades ago. We welcome the recent high-level reaffirmations of this need.

In June 2008, on the twentieth anniversary of the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh asked others to join India in taking the critical first step — a commitment, preferably a binding legal commitment through an international instrument, to eliminate nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework. Other leaders have also expressed their commitment to seek the goal of global zero.

India believes that nuclear disarmament can be achieved by a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework for achieving global and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. We also believe that progressive steps for the de-legitimization of nuclear weapons are essential to achieving the goal of their complete elimination. Measures to reduce nuclear dangers arising from the accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons, increasing restraints on the use of nuclear weapons and de-alerting of nuclear weapons are all pertinent in that regard.

India's resolutions in the First Committee on a "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons" (resolution 65/80) and "Reducing nuclear danger" (resolution 65/60) give expression to some of these steps and have justifiably found support from a large number of countries. These steps were also part of a working paper presented by India at the 2007 session of the Disarmament Commission. The intent of the working paper, which reflects the spirit and substance of the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan, was to stimulate debate and discussion on nuclear disarmament.

The countries with the largest arsenals bear a special responsibility for progress on nuclear disarmament. In this regard, we welcome the ratification of the New START agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation. These two countries still hold more than 90 per cent of the nuclear weapons in the world, and the New START is a step in the right direction. We believe that there is a need for a meaningful dialogue among all States possessing nuclear weapons to build trust and confidence and for reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes. We believe that the expansion of nuclear energy and the reduction of proliferation risks must go hand in hand. The possibility of nuclear material falling into the hands of terrorists is real and could have catastrophic consequences. We are happy that our resolution on this issue entitled "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction" is adopted by consensus in the General Assembly every year.

Working Group II, on "Elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament

decade", held substantive discussions on the revised draft last year, although consensus again eluded us. We hope that the discussions this year will see a greater convergence of views and that we will be able to achieve consensus on this important item.

The draft declaration should reflect the aspirations of the international community in the field of disarmament. We should aim at finding consensus on elements that will be of enduring validity, that uphold the priority of nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, that address other dimensions of global security, including space security, and that strengthen the international framework for addressing issues related to conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons and preventing their use by terrorists. As is its tradition, the Disarmament Commission should focus on these issues of security, taking into account the global interdependence of peoples and nations.

The third item on our agenda is "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons". This issue was also deliberated upon in two previous cycles of Commission's work. Although we are sceptical of how much progress can be achieved in the short time available this year, given that we have not deliberated the question in this cycle, we are ready for substantive deliberations on this issue.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the Disarmament Commission is an important part of the multilateral disarmament machinery. My delegation is committed to working constructively in the coming weeks for the success of this session of the Commission.

Mr. Briens (France) (*spoke in French*): My country associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union, as well as with the words of congratulations expressed to the Chair. I would like to set out a number specific points with regard to the French position.

France expresses the wish that this session of the Disarmament Commission, which brings to an end a three-year cycle, will be useful and fit within the new momentum seen in the international community in the past year. Whether it be the adoption of a comprehensive action plan at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the entry into the force of the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions or, more recently, the entry into force of the New START agreement and the constructive spirit that prevailed during the second session of the Preparatory Committee of the 2012 Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, the successes achieved over the past year amply demonstrate that we can make headway in the field of disarmament when an open and constructive spirit prevails.

This new momentum also demonstrates that the quest for a safer world is an issue that must be addressed in a comprehensive, balanced and concrete manner. Mobilization therefore remains necessary in all fields, including the nuclear, biological, chemical, conventional, ballistic missile proliferation and outer space. France believes that this comprehensive approach should be at the heart of our discussions on the draft declaration on the fourth disarmament decade.

We furthermore welcome the creation this year, pursuant to resolution 65/86, of a third Working Group devoted to practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. It is important that its work not be deferred on the basis of the pace of work of the other two Working Groups.

In the nuclear field, our road map is now made up of the action plans adopted by consensus at the end of the most recent NPT Review Conference, which addressed the nuclear issue in a comprehensive and balanced fashion. Each State party must meet its part of the contract in order to move towards a safer world.

The five permanent members of the Security Council (P-5) are ready to shoulder their responsibility in that regard. That is why, on France's invitation, the first P-5 follow-up meeting to the NPT Review Conference will be held in Paris on 30 June. This initiative bears witness to France's commitment to make progress on this issue and illustrates the resolve of the P-5 to pursue the implementation of specific actions geared towards ensuring full respect for their commitments under the NPT. The meeting will also fit within the rationale of transparency championed by the President of the French Republic in Cherbourg in March 2008 and established in London in September 2009 between the P-5 partners.

We should also strengthen the multilateral framework, prompting all States that have not yet done so, especially annex 2 countries, to quickly ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and to negotiate immediately a fissile material cut-off treaty.

These negotiations should be conducted within the Conference on Disarmament, on which falls that responsibility, and include the whole host of stakeholders involved. To that end, we remain open with respect to innovative measures that will allow the process to move forward. We also call for the immediate establishment of a moratorium on the production of fissile material.

All States must contribute to disarmament by creating the requisite security environment. This means, first and foremost, putting an end to proliferation. I am thinking in particular of North Korea and Iran. France continues to make a special effort in all forums to prevent and reduce this grave threat to international security, including within the Group of Eight (G-8), of which we now hold the presidency.

Furthermore, France supports efforts to implement the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. The 2010 NPT Review Conference allowed for major progress. We should all work on the conditions that will allow the conference scheduled for 2012 to take place with all relevant stakeholders. With this in mind, we support the initiative of the European Union to organize a seminar on the matter.

As I have already noted, France is working in all fields contributing to general and complete disarmament. The Seventh Review Conference for the Biological Weapons Convention, which will be held in December, is one of the major encounters ahead of us. On 15 March, G-8 Ministers for Foreign Affairs, under the French presidency, adopted a declaration with that in mind. We call for strengthening the Convention's regime through the development of a new five-year programme of work, the quest for more effective means of improving compliance with the Convention, improving confidence-building measures and renewing the mandate of the Implementation Support Unit. We also call on all States that have not yet done so to accede to the Convention, since it is a major tool for our collective security.

France furthermore supports, particularly upon the occasion of its G-8 presidency, all concrete efforts to combat the proliferation of ballistic missiles, which is a matter of major concern for the international community given the increased development of ballistic programmes over recent years.

During our chairmanship of The Hague Code of Conduct, which ends in May, we have sought to focus our efforts on promoting the universalization of the Code and on strengthening its actual functioning. In that regard, I would like to welcome the accession of your country of Iraq, Mr. Chair, to The Hague Code of Conduct. This is a tangible step that can contribute to progress towards the objective of making the Middle East a region free from weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

I should now like to turn to conventional weapons. France welcomes the positive and constructive atmosphere prevailing in the work that has taken place thus far on negotiations on an arms trade treaty. The list of equipment discussed to be covered under the treaty seems sufficiently broad and operational. We continue to believe that respect for human rights, international humanitarian law and economic and social development should feature among the criteria for assessing such transfers.

We were in Vientiane last November to welcome the entry into force of the Oslo Convention and begin work on its effective implementation. We would also hope that the work negotiating a sixth protocol to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to deal with cluster munitions would also bear fruit at the review conference to be held in November.

Finally, we would like to see an increased effort on small arms and light weapons. We hope that next May's meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts on the marking, tracing and registering of small arms and light weapons will provide for a fruitful exchange of views.

This handful of issues shows what we are capable of achieving — not in the distant future but in the coming months and years — to collectively create a safer world. We hope that our discussions during this session will reflect the challenges ahead of us. The Chair can count on the support of our delegation in participating in such debates in a constructive spirit.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Cuban delegation, I would like to congratulate the Chair and the rest of the members of the Bureau on their election to lead the work of the Disarmament Commission. We wish them every success.

Cuba fully supports the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and by the representative of Chile on behalf of the Rio Group.

Sixty million people had to die in the Second World War for the leaders of the time to create the United Nations in order to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". More than 65 years later, despite the deep economic and environmental crises affecting the world, military expenditures, instead of decreasing, are increasing at an accelerated rate. In the past 10 years, arms expenditures have grown by 49 per cent, reaching the astronomical figure of $1.5 trillion. One country alone is responsible for nearly half the global military expenditures.

With the resources currently devoted to armaments we could fight the extreme poverty afflicting 1.4 billion people today; feed the more than 1.02 billion hungry people in the world; prevent the deaths of 11 million children who die from hunger and preventable diseases every year; or teach 759 million illiterate adults to read and write. While tens of millions of human beings, victims of poverty and preventable and curable diseases, die, unjustifiable wars continue to be waged, as is happening in Libya today. Such wars are never the solution and always cause thousands of deaths, astonishingly called collateral damage.

A new global order is needed, based on human solidarity and justice, in which conflicts are settled on the basis of dialogue, negotiation and adherence to the principles of non-interference and the sovereign equality of States, and where the philosophy of dispossession leading to war and the use of force ceases to exist.

For Cuba, the Commission's adoption this year of recommendations to achieve nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is a high priority. Our country, together with the other members of NAM, has submitted a comprehensive and detailed working paper to the Commission's Working Group I, which contains concrete recommendations to achieve nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We propose that that NAM document be used as a basis for reaching an agreement on that important issue.

Deteriorating living conditions in the world as a result of global warming, and the existence of nuclear weapons constitute, in Cuba's view, the main challenges to the survival of the human species. The use of only a negligible part of the huge global nuclear arsenal, that is, the explosion of 100 warheads, would bring about nuclear winter in a few hours.

Despite the end of the Cold War, there are still some 23,300 nuclear weapons, almost half of which are ready for immediate use. The mere existence of such weapons and doctrines that prescribe their possession and use pose a serious threat to international peace and security. That is why nuclear disarmament is, and must remain, the highest priority in the field of disarmament.

The only guarantee that nuclear weapons will not be used is their complete elimination and prohibition. The political manipulation of non-proliferation, based on double standards and the existence of a club of the privileged that continues to improve its nuclear weapons, while there are attempts to question the inalienable right of the countries of the South to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, must stop. We must abandon once and for all the nuclear deterrence doctrine, which, far from contributing to nuclear disarmament, perpetuates the possession of such armaments.

Cuba is ready to negotiate, in parallel with the Conference of Disarmament, a treaty that eliminates and prohibits nuclear weapons; a treaty that bans an arms race in outer space; a treaty that provides effective security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States; and a treaty that bans the production of fissile material for the manufacture of nuclear weapons. We believe that the negotiation of a treaty on fissile material is a positive but insufficient measure if subsequent steps to achieve nuclear disarmament are not defined.

The outcome of last year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was mixed. Modest steps forward were agreed. However, the Final Document (A/CONF.2010/590 (Vol. I)) also has significant limitations, is inadequate and is still far from what is currently needed. We made every possible effort for the action plan adopted by the Review Conference to include a time frame with well-defined actions, setting the year 2025 as the deadline to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Regrettably, that was

not reflected in the Final Document owing to the position of some nuclear-weapon States interested in preserving the unacceptable status quo.

Nuclear disarmament cannot continue to be a conditional goal that is continually postponed. It is simply unacceptable that in today's world, there are still tens of thousands of nuclear weapons with the capacity to destroy the world several times over.

It is important that this year the Disarmament Commission recommend a draft declaration of the current decade as the fourth disarmament decade to the General Assembly. That declaration must properly reflect the disarmament priorities that we States have agreed. The designation of a fourth disarmament decade would help to mobilize international efforts in response to current and emerging disarmament challenges.

Lastly, with regard to the new item on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, Cuba will make known its positions and proposals, as appropriate, during the debate.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The work of this session takes place in a particular context against the backdrop of landmark positive events, namely, the entry into force of the Russian-American New START agreement and the successful holding of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The negotiating process within the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has remained deadlocked for many years. It is important to fully support and develop that intensified process of multilateral disarmament diplomacy, to strengthen existing international non-proliferation and arms control mechanisms and to establish new instruments where necessary.

The three-year cycle of the Commission's work is coming to an end. In that regard, I would like to highlight Russia's priorities. As one of the major nuclear States, the Russian Federation reaffirms its commitment to the obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In that connection, a long-term strategic task of the foreign policy laid down by the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Medvedev, is the ultimate goal of building a world free of nuclear weapons. We intend to strive for consistent progress towards that goal.

Russia has recently taken many historic steps. The Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms of 1991 and the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty of 2002 have been successfully implemented. To replace those two treaties, a new agreement with the United States on the further reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms was drawn up and signed. The new Treaty entered into force on 5 February and both sides have started to implement it.

By establishing irreversible, verifiable and transparent strategic arms reductions, the Treaty will strengthen not only the security of Russia and the United States, but international stability as a whole. Its implementation will lead to strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and furthering the nuclear disarmament process. We look forward to the principles of the equality, parity and indivisible security of the parties to the Treaty serving as a new standard for all subsequent disarmament and arms control agreements, whether bilateral or multilateral.

We are also ready to discuss further reductions in nuclear arsenals. At the same time, it is our belief that a favourable international environment is required for this to happen. It is important to recall that Russia and the United States are not the only States that should shoulder the burden of nuclear responsibility. Against the backdrop of the significant nuclear reductions being carried out bilaterally, there is an increasing urgency to expand the disarmament process by making it multilateral in nature.

Furthermore, we consider that it would be wrong to limit the disarmament process to the endeavours of the States parties to the NPT. We call on all nuclear-weapon States to make an active contribution to the disarmament process. We believe that the elimination of nuclear weapons will be attainable only as the result of a comprehensive, step-by-step disarmament process, with strategic stability being maintained and the principle of equal and indivisible security for all being strictly followed.

Under current conditions, further nuclear arms reductions are inconceivable if due account is not taken of all the factors involved in international security that may adversely affect strategic stability. Such factors include the prospect of weapons in space, plans to

create strategic offensive non-nuclear-weapons systems, a unilateral build-up in terms of strategic missile defence and a growing imbalance in conventional arms. Strategic offensive and defensive armaments are inextricably linked. The deeper we go in terms of the reduction of strategic offensive armaments, the more careful and balanced we should be with respect to the deployment of anti-ballistic-missile defence systems. Missile defence deployment, if it is untrammeled and bears no relation to real missile-related threats and challenges, may trigger retaliatory measures and ratchet up the arms race. That cannot be allowed to happen.

Clearly, these problems will not be easy to solve. We welcome responsible steps in this area and pay due attention to the ideas and initiatives on nuclear disarmament introduced in the international community, in the context of maintaining a constructive dialogue with all interested parties. In that respect, we believe in the continued relevance of Russia's initiative to establish a universal legal regime based on the 1987 Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in order to eliminate intermediate- and shorter-range missiles, and its initiative to return all nuclear weapons to within their owners' national territories and destroy the infrastructure of their sites abroad.

The decisions taken by the 2010 NPT Conference are a reliable benchmark for the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime. They are based on a clear balance among the three main components of the NPT: non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Russia supports the idea of launching negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament in the framework of its balanced programme of work on a fissile material cut-off treaty. There is also a need to ensure that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) comes into force as soon as possible.

We strongly urge all States, especially those on which entry into force of the CTBT depends, to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay. We also continue to support the process of establishing zones free of nuclear weapons and of other weapons of mass destruction. We consider this to be an important and effective tool for strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

On 20 March, Russia ratified the Protocols to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. We expect all other nuclear-weapon States that have not yet done the same to follow our example. For the near future, the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems also remains a priority. In particular, we support the convening of a special international conference on this issue in 2012. We are ready, together with the other depositaries to the NPT and the Secretary-General, to do everything necessary to implement this decision. We have already undertaken work to that end.

However, that goal can be achieved only if all the parties involved adopt a constructive attitude, especially the States of the Middle East themselves, whose political will will determine how productive the process of establishing such a zone will be. An important outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference is the determination of the best means of providing unimpeded access for all States parties to the Treaty to the benefits of the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

There is a growing global understanding of the fact that the exercise of the legitimate interests of many countries in this field requires a modern, proliferation-resistant architecture of international cooperation in the sphere of Atoms for Peace — an architecture that is based on stringent mechanisms for the verification of non-proliferation obligations and on multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle that offer a feasible alternative to the development by States on their own territory of elements of a nuclear fuel cycle that are costly and sensitive from the standpoint of non-proliferation.

With that goal in mind, Russia established the International Uranium Enrichment Centre in Angarsk, where an assured supply of low-enriched uranium, managed by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has been set up. It can already be used by any State observing its non-proliferation obligations. We deem it necessary also to continue to support jointly the international community's calls for the progressive development of the IAEA safeguards system and the universalization of the safeguards agreement and its additional protocol as the commonly recognized standard of verification of States' compliance with their non-proliferation obligations as one of the fundamental conditions of nuclear exports control.

We note the increasing importance to the international community of reliable mechanisms for tackling and countering the threats that may result if sensitive nuclear materials and technologies fall into the hands of non-State actors. International cooperation to ensure the security of nuclear facilities and to counter illicit trafficking in nuclear materials is of strategic importance.

We must jointly contribute to the universalization of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. We stress the importance of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the development of best practices for the identification of nuclear materials. All of these efforts deserve targeted support, including in our forum.

One of the priorities of Russian foreign policy remains the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space. The time is nigh for the international community to proceed to serious, substantive work in this respect. The basis for such an undertaking already exists: the draft China-Russia treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space. We believe that our immediate task is to initiate comprehensive discussion on this issue in the Conference on Disarmament and thus pave the way for future substantive negotiations.

An important element of our efforts to prevent the placement of weapons in outer space is the elaboration of outer-space transparency and confidence-building measures. During our five years' work on this matter in the framework of the United Nations, we have done considerable groundwork through proposals on such transparency and confidence-building measures. This undertaking, which has moved to a qualitatively new level as a result of joint efforts, took shape in the form of the creation of a group of governmental experts. We thank everyone for their support for the corresponding resolution — General Assembly resolution 65/68.

Starting in 2012, the group will be conducting a study on outer-space transparency and confidence-building measures, at the required expert level. We believe that the end product of the Group's work could be an international document on rules of conduct in outer space. Recently, there has been some reinvigoration of efforts to resolve problems related to the strengthening and modernization of the conventional arms control regime in Europe, but that process has not yet become irreversible. The most important goal is to reach agreement on a mandate for future negotiations, which are scheduled to begin this year.

Russia is not putting forward any preconditions, assuming that all participants in the negotiations may bring up any questions of concern to them. We are counting on our partners to adopt the same constructive approach. Breaking off a dialogue would not serve the interests of European security.

The Russian Federation calls for the consolidation of United Nations efforts to combat the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We will take an active part in the Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on the Implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons, to be held in May 2011.

We also support the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. The Register remains the only global instrument for transparency, allowing a close watch to be kept on such arms. We do not welcome the recent downward trend in the number of national reports. We are keen to see a further universalization of the Register, on the understanding that the main goal should be to improve the efficiency of its functioning.

We share the view that it is necessary to put some order into the global circulation of conventional arms. We consider the fact that the international community has begun to deal with this issue to be an important step in the right direction. We support the holding of further discussions on an international arms trade treaty in the framework of the United Nations. We consider the principles of comprehensive coverage, inclusiveness and consensus-based decision-making to be exceptionally important here. We are interested in the elaboration of a well-balanced document that will conform to the highest international standards and be aimed at addressing specific problems. Our paramount goal should be to combat illicit arms trafficking.

Our work in the Disarmament Commission is an integral part of our effort to ensure international security. The Russian delegation is ready to work constructively, and we intend to do our level best to find solutions that are generally acceptable to all.

Mr. Barriga (Liechtenstein): My delegation conveys its sincere congratulations to all members of the Bureau upon their election.

The ultimate goal of disarmament is to prevent human suffering. As a small and unarmed State, Liechtenstein approaches disarmament in the context of human rights and international humanitarian law, and we encourage cross-linkages to those thematic areas. We believe that it is imperative to strike the right balance between visionary goals and practical disarmament measures, which can serve to have an immediate effect.

Last year, the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) adopted a Final Document (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)) that contained innovative and forward-looking measures, especially in the action plan on nuclear disarmament. We recall in particular the recognition by the NPT Review Conference that international humanitarian law also applies in the context of nuclear weapons. We also recall the recognition of the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States in the de-alerting of nuclear weapons. My delegation also joined the call of many others for a nuclear weapons convention, in line with the Secretary-General's five-point plan. Now is the time to translate the commitments made at the Conference into actions, especially the commitment made by nuclear-weapon States to discuss policies leading to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

Liechtenstein continues to support the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which we have ratified. The CTBT Organization's international monitoring mechanism has once again proven that it works. In the aftermath of the recent nuclear catastrophe in Japan, the worldwide network of monitoring stations was able to detect the smallest quantities of radioactive particles as they spread all over the globe.

We must utilize the renewed momentum in the field of disarmament to achieve true progress in the Conference on Disarmament. The Conference should heed the General Assembly's calls for an early negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, which remains the most achievable of all the tasks on the Conference's agenda. Continued inaction by that body, which since 1996 has only once been able to agree on a programme of work, is no longer acceptable.

Similarly, the Disarmament Commission meets for three weeks every year, but for the past 12 years it has not succeeded in producing any substantive outcome, except for bills for conference services. Liechtenstein therefore believes that the time has come to reconsider the purpose and working methods of this body. If the status quo persists, the General Assembly must necessarily reconsider the present disarmament architecture in its entirety.

Liechtenstein also firmly believes in transparency as one of the most important confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. It is in this spirit that we report to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations System for the Standardized Reporting of Military Expenditures. We encourage other States to do the same. However, as a small State with limited administrative resources, we are aware of the heavy burden that the various disarmament resolutions place on States that wish to report and submit their views to the Secretary-General. We therefore encourage the Secretariat to develop a consolidated reporting tool. That would ease the bureaucratic burden placed on small and developing States and encourage increased reporting.

Let me also take this opportunity to reaffirm Liechtenstein's firm support for a strong, effective and comprehensive arms trade treaty. We were heartened by the quality of discussions at the second session of the Preparatory Committee last month. We were especially pleased by the strong support for the 7+1+1 formula, which would include small arms and light weapons and ammunition within the scope of the treaty. As with disarmament, the ultimate goal of an arms trade treaty should be to reduce human suffering. It is logical, therefore, that the protection of human rights and the promotion of international humanitarian law ought to be stated objectives of the treaty. We look forward to the final session of the Preparatory Committee and the negotiation of a strong and effective treaty next year.

Mr. Ochoa (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me to congratulate all the members of the Bureau on their election.

In addition to associating ourselves with the statement made yesterday by the representative of Chile on behalf of the Rio Group, Mexico shares the sentiments of the Swedish and Swiss delegations as well as what was just said by the representative of Liechtenstein, who stressed that the mandate of the Disarmament Commission is to hold deliberations with a view to producing substantive recommendations in

the area of disarmament and that the lack of results in more than 10 years of work is completely disheartening.

This reality, along with the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament, which still has not adopted a programme of work, not only reaffirms the urgent need to discuss mechanisms that revitalize the disarmament machinery within the United Nations system, including the work mechanisms that are used, but it also leads to an entirely negative perception of multilateral diplomacy in this area by people who are looking at the United Nations from outside of its walls.

We, the States Members of the United Nations, representatives of the international community, owe the peoples of our united nations specific results, especially in an area such as nuclear disarmament, where the security of peoples is at stake. We must have the ability to be accountable and to justify the fact that more than $1.5 million is spent for the three weeks that make up the Commission's session, without concrete results. If we do not produce specific results, it will be impossible to explain the expenditure of so much money, without counting that which we have spent over more than 10 years.

Although the nature of this forum is deliberative, we do not believe that it is necessary to reiterate positions that have already been expressed by others in the area of disarmament. We feel that our priority should be to work to produce substantive recommendations on the three items of our agenda, yielding practical results when they are implemented. Positive signs in the area of disarmament lead us to believe that this could be a moment of change. However, the world will judge us by our actions, and not by our words.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.